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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, June 6, 1932.

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Subject: "Thrifty Marketing." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

"It's not just scrimping and saving at home that helps the budget. It's also knowing how to pick and choose when you go to market."

That's what my Scotch grandmother used to say. And I'm sure that her saying is still sensible. Wise buying is a subject well worth any housekeeper's time and study. It's valuable for any of us who have this job of providing meals for the family to know how to get a well-balanced diet for the least money.

Miss Hedora Ward at the Federal Bureau of Home Economics, has been keeping tab on food prices for the last year. She has a lot of information at her finger tips to help you when you next go to town with your market basket on your arm.

I asked Miss Ward the other day if any foods were down to pre-war levels or lower.

"Yes, indeed," she said. "You can buy today quite a number of foods at 1913 prices, or even lower. For example, lard, eggs, butter, and rice are all much lower than in 1913, while fresh pork, some of the inexpensive beef cuts, flour, sugar, potatoes, and cheese are very close to their 1913 prices.

"Now if you are thinking in terms of food groups needed for a well-balanced diet, you can find very low priced foods in each group. In fact, I believe that's the way to start. When you're marketing, carry in your mind a picture of the food needs of your family in terms of the groups of food needed for adequate nutrition. First, of course, there's milk. Then come vegetables and fruits; the cereal group including breadstuffs; the sweets and fats; and eggs, meat, fish and other protein foods.

"You know how much money you have to spend for food. The nutrition specialists can tell you exactly how best to divide up your food dollar among these different food groups. Then keep your eyes open for the low-priced items within each group. And set a limit on how much you can afford to spend for a food of that kind."

Miss Ward smiled and added that by setting a definite limit for each group she kept herself from buying many foods which tempt her, but which she

knows she can't afford.

I asked about buying fruits and vegetables.

"If you watch prices," she answered, "you can find a long list of fruits and vegetables costing 10 cents a pound or less. During the past year, at one time or another, there were at least 65 fruits and vegetables on this list. When the family grows a bit weary of potatoes, cabbage, apples and some of the other year-round stand bys, give them a treat by serving the foods in season. Just now snap beans, peas, strawberries, cherries, rhubarb, pineapple and some of the greens are very moderate in price.

"As for meats and fish," Miss Ward continued, "there are a surprising number of different cuts of meat and different varieties of fresh fish at less than 20 cents a pound. Of course, meat, fish, and egg prices vary quite a bit with the different seasons.

"It's really an interesting game--one that the whole family can play--to see how much variety you can get within the limit you set for each class of foods."

"And cereals, Miss Ward? What about buying them?"

"Cereal prices change little with the different seasons, but there are often special sales on cereals. If you keep posted on the regular prices you will recognize the bargains when they come. I always compare the per pound prices of the different cereals, as they all have approximately the same food value. If I can save money by buying cereals in bulk, I buy that way. Some of the packaged cereals come in several sizes. I get the larger-sized package for I save money that way. You certainly can get a lot of food for a small amount of money if you choose your cereals wisely. Rice isn't the only bargain cereal right now. Macaroni and some of the wheat, corn and oat cereals are lower than they've been for years."

So there are two good marketing points to remember--watch for the foods in season and watch for the special sales.

Next, I asked Miss Ward what she thought of buying canned foods and non-perishable staples in large quantities--whether she thought it was a good plan.

"That depends," she told me, "on whether you think prices are going to rise or fall. When prices are stable or going up, then it's a good idea to buy nonperishable foods in as large a quantity as you can store <u>conveniently</u>. (In a small apartment, of course, it would be most inconvenient to store any quantity) When prices are falling, it's better to buy only what you need for a short time. To illustrate what can happen on a falling market, let me tell you about a young housekeeper I know. Last summer she had a chance to go through a canning factory where an excellent quality of fruit was being packed. She wanted some of that fruit. It was so good that she wanted several cases. So the manufacturer sold it to her at the current <u>wholesale</u> price. She went home happy in the thought that she had some fine fruit and had saved a lot of money. Imagine her surprise when, a few days ago, she discovered that she could buy the same quality fruit by the <u>single</u> can at her regular grocery store for <u>less</u> than it had

cost her several months ago by the case at wholesale. Of course, if prices had gone up it would have been a different story."

Here are some more suggestions from Miss Ward about buying canned goods:

"In buying canned goods be sure to read the label. Some canned foods are now marked with quality grades. The highest grade of fruits and vegetables is called "fancy". The second grade of fruit is called "choice," and the second grade of vegetables is called "extra standard." The third grade of both is labeled "standard." These are the grades that you'll meet most often in the market. All canned goods are also marked with the net weight of the contents, as I've been telling you after my talks with Bill, the Food and Drug Inspector. "Net weight" includes the weight of the sirup around the fruits and the liquid with the vegetables. In general, when you consider the cost of canned foods pound for pound, the larger can is the better buy. The most popular size can of vegetables is the No. 2 which holds about a pound and a quarter. For fruits, the most popular size can is No. 2 1/2, which holds about a pound and three-quarters."

That's all we have about marketing today, but the next time I learn more helpful facts from Miss Ward, I'll pass them straight on to you. By the way, if you want bulletins or leaflets on low-cost diets, write me and I'll be glad to send you what we have from the Bureau of Home Economics.

Please get out your pencils now while I tell you about our low-cost menu today. The Menu Specialist has planned for you a meal that is not only inexpensive, but is also quick and easy to prepare and will leave few dishes to wash afterward. The dessert, prepared the day before, makes it a meal that can be served in double-quick time.

Ready now? Just three parts to our lunch or supper menu. First, quick potato soup-(I'm going to give you the recipe for that).

Second, Bacon and lettuce sandwiches. You can make these sandwiches extra good by toasting them. Use toasted finger rolls or toasted whole wheat bread.

Third, the dessert--strawberry ice box cake. If you look in your green cookbook, you'll find on page 92 a recipe for chocolate ice box cake, a sponge cake with chocolate filling which is set overnight in the refrigerator. Put a marker in at page 92 of the green cookbook because that sponge cake recipe is one you'll want to use. Then turn over to page 102. There you'll find the strawberry filling recipe for strawberry ice box cake. A delicious dessert.

Quick potato soup, made with grated raw potato, is just as quick and easy as its name suggests and it's very good into the bargain. So here's the recipe for it.

Five ingredients:

1/2 cup of grated raw potato
3 cups of milk, whole or skimmed, or 3 cups of milk and water
1 thick slice of onion
1 tablespoon of butter, or other fat and
Salt or celery salt.

There are your ingredients. I'll go over them once again. (Repeat.)

Mix the first three ingredients and bring them quickly to the boiling point, cooking until the liquid thickens. Now remove the onion and add the salt and fat. Serve the soup strained or unstrained, and, if you like, add a little very finely chopped parsley for additional flavor.

You may be interested in knowing that you can also make quick vegetable soup of grated raw carrots or turnips, both of which contain vitamin C. There is a recipe in the green cookbook for quick turnip soup, which would work also for quick carrot soup.

Tomorrow, since that will be Tuesday, we'll have a talk about laundering your summer clothes and I'll tell you how the textile specialists advise washing clothes to make them look best and wear longest. We'll discuss laundering silks, delicate linens and cottons, washing silk hose and underwear and washing rayon garments.